

people, we have it within our power to meet this challenge.

President Kennedy once said: “Our problems are manmade, therefore they can be solved by man. And man can be as big as he wants.”

These are difficult years for our country. But we are Americans. We are tougher than the times we live in, and we are bigger than our politics have been. So let’s meet the moment. Let’s get to work, and let’s show the world

once again why the United States of America remains the greatest nation on Earth.

Thank you very much. God bless you, and God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:09 p.m. in the House Chamber of the U.S. Capitol. In his remarks, he referred to Sens. Kathryn A. “Kay” Bailey Hutchison and John F. Kerry; and Warren E. Buffett, chief executive officer and chairman, Berkshire Hathaway Inc.

## Remarks at the University of Richmond in Richmond, Virginia September 9, 2011

*The President.* Hello, Richmond! Thank you. Thank you, Richmond. Well, it is good to be in Richmond, Virginia. Thank you, Nigel, for that outstanding introduction. Give Nigel a big round of applause.

Everybody is a special guest, but there are a few people I want to acknowledge: First of all, the outstanding president of the University of Richmond, Ed Ayers; the mayor of Richmond, Dwight Jones, is in the house; former Governor of Virginia, and one of my greatest friends, the first person to endorse me outside of Illinois, my home State—right here in Richmond, Virginia—Tim Kaine; and his lovely wife Anne, who I love more. And another history maker and outstanding former Governor, Doug Wilder is in the house.

Now—you guys can sit down, by the way, if you want. *[Laughter]* But you don’t have seats—don’t—you guys don’t sit down. *[Laughter]*

It is good to be here in Virginia, first of all, because the sun is out. I have not seen sun in about 5 days. So it was nice to remember what that’s like. It is always nice to get out of Washington once in a while, be with the American people. And I have great memories of Richmond, and I have wonderful feelings about the Commonwealth of Virginia. The people here, I just think, have an innate optimism and a can-do spirit that is typical of this country.

*Audience member.* We love you!

*The President.* Well, I love you too. *[Applause]* I love you too.

So it’s good to get some fresh air. It’s good to get some fresh perspective. I’m grateful to spend some time with you. Because, obviously, we’re going through a difficult time in this country, and I know you folks are as frustrated as I am about the economy. I know you’re also frustrated not just about our economic conditions, but also what’s happening in Washington.

*Audience members.* Amen!

*The President.* Tim, I got an “amen” there. *[Laughter]*

You have every right to be frustrated. Here in Virginia, here in Richmond, people don’t have time for political concerns. You’ve got real-life concerns. You may be looking for a job, or you know somebody who’s looking for a job.

*Audience member.* We still love you, Barack!

*The President.* I love you back. *[Laughter]*

You make sacrifices to make ends meet. You work hard to meet your responsibilities. You expect the people you send to Washington to do the same thing, to meet their responsibilities. You expect, in a time of crisis, that everybody stops the political circus and actually do something to help people, to help the economy, to restore some security and opportunity, restore the American Dream, restore those things that made America the envy of the world. In other words, you expect action. And you deserve it right now.

And that’s why, after a few scheduling issues, I went to Congress last night—*[laughter]*—to suggest new ways that we can grow the economy, help businesses, and put more of

our fellow Americans back to work. It's called the "American Jobs Act." Next week, I will send it to Congress. They should pass it right away.

Now, everything in the "American Jobs Act"—everything in there—is the kind of proposal that's been supported in the past by both Democrats and Republicans. Nothing radical in this bill. Everything in it will put more people back to work and more money back into the pockets of those who are working. Everything in it will be paid for.

But the reason I'm here in Richmond is because, to make it happen, every one of your voices can make a difference. Every one of your voices will have an impact.

Now, I'm going to talk about the politics in a second, but let me right now just talk about what's in the "American Jobs Act." It will create more jobs for construction workers, more jobs for teachers, more jobs for veterans, more jobs for young people, more jobs for the long-term unemployed. It will provide a tax break to companies if they hire new workers. It will cut payroll taxes in half for every small-business owner and every working American. It will jump-start an economy that has stalled, and it will give companies the confidence that, if they hire new workers and they invest in their businesses, then there are going to be customers there who can afford to actually buy the things they're selling.

Passing this jobs bill will put people to work rebuilding our crumbling roads and our crumbling bridges. And it will also help us rebuild our schools. I just—in the back, I was taking some photos with folks who had helped out to organize this event, and there was a young lady who is a teacher. And she said: "I heard your speech last night. I really appreciate it. I'm teaching eighth grade English, and I teach in a trailer." We shouldn't have people teaching in trailers. We shouldn't have kids learning in trailers. They should have classrooms with Internet and science labs.

So you've got aging bridges on I-95, need to replace them. You've got schools like Nigel's that need to be upgraded. There are millions of unemployed construction workers across

America ready to put on their tool belt and get dirty. I don't know about you, I don't want the newest airports, the fastest railroads, to be built in China, I want them to build—I want them to be built right here in the United States of America.

*Audience members.* U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

*The President.* I don't want any of our kids to study in subpar schools. I want all our kids to study in great schools. So there's work to be done; there are workers ready to do it. Let's pass this jobs bill right away.

Passing this jobs bill will put thousands of teachers in Virginia and across America back to work when we need them most. This is a new age. Everybody here knows that. You—if you want a good job, a good career, if we want America to succeed, then we've got to have the best trained, most highly skilled workers in the world. You've got places like South Korea that are adding teachers to prepare their kids for a global economy. We're laying off our teachers in droves. It's unfair to our kids. It undermines their future; it undermines our future. It has to stop. Let's pass this bill and put our teachers back in the classroom where they belong.

Passing this bill gives companies new tax credits to hire America's veterans. There are a lot of veterans here in Richmond and all across Virginia. We ask these men and women to leave their careers or interrupt their careers, leave their families, risk their lives to fight for us. They come home, and they can't find a job? The last thing they should have to do is fight for a job when they come home. Pass this bill now and put these folks to work.

Pass this jobs bill, and we'll give small-business owners here in Richmond and here in Virginia a tax cut for hiring new workers, but also for raising workers' wages. Cut their payroll taxes in half, that will give small businesses money they can use to hire more workers.

Pass this bill, and we give hundreds of thousands of disadvantaged youth the hope and the dignity of a summer job next year. And that instills in them good habits that will last a lifetime. It will make it easier for them to find a job in the future and to continue their education.

Passing this bill will give companies a tax credit for hiring anybody who has spent more than 6 months looking for work. And there are a lot of folks like that. This has been a terrible recession. And I get letters from folks, and they write to me about what it's like, month after month, writing letters, sending out résumés, knocking on doors. And folks get discouraged. And when they get discouraged, at some point they drop out of the labor force, and it's very hard for them then to get reattached. And you've got some employers now, if you've been out of work a long time, even if they're looking for a job—or even if they're looking to hire, a lot of times, they'll say, “Well, you've been out of work too long, I'm not sure we want to hire you,” which is not fair. It's not right.

So this bill will help people on unemployment insurance to do temporary work to build skills while looking for a full-time job. And we should extend unemployment insurance for another year. Not only is it the right thing to do for those families, but if we cut off unemployment insurance right now, that's money that millions of unemployed folks can't spend on their basic needs. So that money comes out of the economy. That means businesses have fewer customers, and the economy, for everybody, including those who have work, will shrink. That would be a big, unnecessary blow to this economy.

Passing this bill will give a typical working family a \$1,500 tax cut next year. So this boosts the thousand-dollar tax cut that Democrats and Republicans already passed for this year. We can't allow that tax cut to expire. It would hit middle class families with a tax increase at the worst possible time. And some of you may have heard, I said to folks yesterday, especially my good Republican friends, I said, you guys have made pledges never to raise taxes on everybody ever again; you can't make an exception when the tax break is going to middle class people.

So this is the “American Jobs Act.” It will lead to new jobs for construction workers, teachers, veterans, young people, the long-term unemployed, provide tax credits for busi-

nesses and workers. And it will not add to the deficit; it will be paid for.

Look, we spent a whole summer fussing about the deficit. And it is legitimate for us to get a Government that is living within its means, just like families do. Now, Democrats and Republicans have already agreed to cut spending by about a trillion dollars over the next decade. They've agreed to identify another 1.5 trillion in savings by the end of the year. What I said last night is, let's go further. Let's be a little more ambitious.

I believe we need to do more to make sure that we can do—to boost jobs and growth in the short term and still bring down our debt in the long run. So 10 days from now, I'll release a more ambitious deficit reduction plan, and it will follow the balanced approach that I've been talking about for months. Yes, we need to cut wasteful spending. We're going to need to strengthen our retirement programs. And yes, we've got to ask the wealthiest Americans and biggest corporations to pay their fair share.

Look, Virginia, I want to make very clear: I understand nobody likes paying taxes. I understand. I don't like—I pay a lot of taxes. [*Laughter*] I mean, you can look, it's public, the amount of taxes I pay. It's serious. [*Laughter*] And I'm not taking advantage of a bunch of loopholes. So I understand that. But we've always lived based on the principle that everybody has got to do their fair share. And we've got to make some choices. We've got to decide what are our priorities. We've got to ask ourselves what's not just best for me, but what's best for us. What's the best way to grow the economy and create jobs?

Should we keep tax loopholes for oil companies?

*Audience members.* No!

*The President.* Or should we use that money to give small-business owners a tax credit when they hire new workers?

*Audience members.* Yes!

*The President.* We can't afford to do both.

Should we keep tax breaks for millionaires and billionaires, or should we put teachers back to work so our kids are ready to graduate

from college and get a good job? We can't afford to do both.

We've got to make real choices about the kind of country that we want to be. That's not class warfare. That's—I'm not attacking anybody. I'm just—it's simple math. We can't afford for folks who are the most fortunate to do the least and put the largest burden on the folks who are struggling the most. That doesn't make sense.

Now, I put forward this plan, the "American Jobs Act," but we can't stop there. We can't stop there. As I've said since I ran for this office, we've got to look beyond the immediate crisis and start building an economy that lasts, an economy that's not built on housing bubbles, not built on easy credit, not built on Wall Street shenanigans, but an economy that creates good middle class jobs that pay well and restore some sense of security.

And we need—so let me tell you what this means. I mean, we live in a world where technology has made it possible for companies to take their business anywhere. If we want them to start here and stay here and hire here, we have to be able to outbuild, outeducate, and outinnovate every other country on Earth. That's what we've got to fight for.

And that means everybody has got to up their game. All the college students here, I know you guys are having fun in college. That's—I'm glad you're having fun, but you need to hit the books. You're competing now against kids in Bangalore and kids in Beijing, and you've got to—and you can't avoid those math classes and the engineering classes and the science classes. We've got to focus. Everybody has got to up their game. Businesses have to get more efficient and more productive. Employees have to constantly upgrade their skills. Even if you have a good job, you've got to keep on staying on top of it. Government has to become more efficient. We've got to be smarter in terms of how we help people to succeed.

But to do all those things, I'm going to need your help.

*Audience member.* You got it.

*The President.* Now, look, I know that we—this has been a long slog, dealing with this economy. And I know that when I came into office, everybody was thinking, well, 6 months, we'll get this all solved and—[laughter]—but I told you at the time, I told you at the time, we were—this was going to be a tough, long journey. And I also told you I couldn't do it on my own.

Every kind of proposal in the "American Jobs Act," every proposal to put more workers on the job, more money in their pockets, every single one of these proposals has been supported by Democrats and Republicans before. And so they should be supporting them now. And that will only happen, though, if they set politics aside for a moment to deal with America's problems. And the only way they're going to do that is if they hear from you.

To their credit, I was glad to hear some Republicans, including your Congressman, say that they've got—they see room for us to work together. They said that they're open to some of the proposals to create American jobs.

Look, I know that folks sometime think they've used up benefit of the doubt, but I'm an eternal optimist. I'm an optimistic person. I'm an optimistic person. I believe in America. I believe in our democracy. I believe that if you just stay at it long enough, eventually, after they've exhausted all the options, folks do the right thing.

But we've got to give them a little help to do the right thing. So I'm asking all of you to lift up your voices, not just here in Richmond—anybody watching, listening, following online—I want you to call, I want you to e-mail, I want you to tweet—[laughter]—I want you to fax, I want you to visit, I want you to Facebook, send a carrier pigeon. [Laughter] I want you to tell your Congressperson, the time for gridlock and games is over. The time for action is now. The time to create jobs is now.

Pass this bill. If you want construction workers on the worksite, pass this bill. If you want teachers in the classroom, pass this bill. You want small-business owners to hire new people, pass this bill. If you want veterans to get their fair share of opportunity that they helped create, pass this bill. If you want a tax break, pass this bill.

Prove you will fight as hard for tax cuts for workers and middle class people as you do for oil companies and rich folks. Pass this bill. Let's get something done.

The next election is 14 months away. We cannot wait. The American people do not have the luxury of waiting another 14 months for some action. Some of you are living paycheck to paycheck, week to week, day by day. Now is not the time for people in Washington to be worrying about their jobs, it's time for them to be worrying about your jobs. Now is the time to put Americans back to work. Now is the time to act.

We are not a people that just look and watch and wait to see what happens. We're Americans. We make things happen. We're tougher than these times. We are bigger than the smallness of our politics. We are patriots, and we are pioneers and innovators and entrepreneurs,

who, through individual effort and through a common commitment to one another, will build an economy that is once again the engine and the envy of the world. And we will write our own destiny.

It's within our power. But we've got to seize the moment. So let's just shake off all the nay-saying and the anxiety and the hand-wringing. Enough of that. Let's get to work. Let's show the world once again why America is the greatest nation on Earth.

Thank you, everybody. God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:36 a.m. in Robins Center Arena. In his remarks, he referred to Nigel Richardson, student, Richmond Community High School; Anne Holton, wife of former Gov. Timothy M. Kaine of Virginia; and Rep. Eric I. Cantor.

## Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives Requesting Disaster Relief Funds

*September 9, 2011*

*Dear Mr. Speaker:*

I ask the Congress to consider the enclosed budget request for disaster response needs through Fiscal Year (FY) 2012. It includes a supplemental appropriations request for FY 2011 of \$500 million and a budget amendment for FY 2012 of \$4.6 billion for the Department of Homeland Security.

The proposed totals for FY 2011 and FY 2012 would increase by \$5.1 billion as a result of this request. The additional funding would fund disaster response needs in the Disaster Relief Fund, including approximately \$1.5 billion for the Federal share of costs to respond to Hurricane Irene.

This request responds to urgent and essential needs. The supplemental appropriations request would be designated as an emergency requirement. The request for FY 2012 in the budget amendment would constitute disaster relief within the meaning of section 251 of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended by the Budget Control Act of 2011, and would therefore adjust the discretionary spending levels for FY 2012 pursuant to section 251. The details of this request are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

## Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Certain Terrorist Attacks

*September 9, 2011*

*To the Congress of the United States:*

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1622(d), provides for the auto-

matic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal*